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ABSTRACT

It is proposed that non-native teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in non-English-speaking developing countries receive certification of English language proficiency, despite the fact that they are graduates of teacher education programs. Such certification would be entrusted to an independent body, such as a national language testing center, which would produce and administer a standardized test, and would establish the norms and operational definitions of each proficiency level (i.e., beginning, intermediate, advanced). The test would be administered to graduating students at the beginning of their final semester or year of teacher training. Elementary and junior high school teachers should have at least an intermediate level of proficiency, and senior high school teachers should have an advanced proficiency level. Additional language training should be required for students not meeting these standards, with non-compliance affecting school accreditation. In the long term, this system may imply revision of the teacher education curriculum, with increased opportunities for English language development and reduced time spent on less relevant studies. Development of regional tests would be ideal so that there is a regional standard of proficiency for teachers. Also, it would stimulate healthy competition among EFL countries. Academic and practical challenges are foreseen and discussed. Contains 20 references. (Author/MSE)

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THE STANDARDIZATION OF TEACHER TRAINEES IN EFL COUNTRIES[1]

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"Teaching a language , like teaching any skill, involves one additional requirement placed on the teacher: the ability to use the skill himself. Language teaching is very much more efficiently performed by a person who has mastered the skill he teaches."
J . Donald Bowen

Abstract:

Non-native teachers of English as a foreign language in the developing countries may need certification in terms of their proficiency, particularly if the country concerned is an EFL country. The assumption is that many of them are not proficient enough to become teachers of English, even though they are graduates of teacher training colleges.

The certification of proficiency is entrusted to an independent body, such as a national language testing center, which would produce and administer the standardized test. In addition, it would also provide the norms and operational definitions of each level of proficiency, i.e. elementary, intermediate and advanced. The test is administered to the graduating students at the beginning of their final semester or year. After taking the test, the trainees will be awarded certificates of proficiency accordingly. To be effective teachers for primary and upper primary levels (elementary and junior high schools), they should be at least in the intermediate level; and for the secondary schools (senior high school), they should be in the advanced level.

If the proficiency level is below standard, the teachers college concerned should provide more training for their students to improve proficiency during the remaining academic period. If there is an accreditation system, the performance of the students will greatly affect the accreditation of the teachers college concerned.

In the longer term, depending on the results of the standardized test, the curriculum of the teachers college may have to be revised. If the results are poor, an overhaul may be inevitable. The steps to be taken would include increasing the number of hours for subjects which would improve the trainees competence and explicit knowledge in language system and use, and competence in teaching EFL while reducing the number of hours for less relevant subjects.

It would be ideal if regional tests could be developed and administered so that there is a regional standard of proficiency for teachers. Such a thing will also stimulate a healthy competition among different EFL countries.

Certainly there will be criticisms, problems and difficulties encountered, academic as well as practical. Academic problems would include the difficulties in constructing the standardized tests and formulating operational definitions on levels of proficiency; whereas practical problems would include the difficulties in establishing, funding and sustaining an independent national testing institution. Proposed solutions to these problems will be discussed.

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Introduction

There are as many roads to Rome as there are ways to improving the teaching of English as a foreign language, and one of them is to improve the quality of the teacher. Thus this paper proposes one of the many ways to improve the proficiency of the teacher trainees before they graduate by administering

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a standardized test to them. Such a test would hopefully encourage the students as well as the teacher trainers to reach a certain national standard of proficiency. Without such a yardstick, the proficiency of the graduates from different teacher training colleges (further abbreviated as TTCs) would vary considerably, many of them would be unqualified to become teachers of English.

I take the EFL countries, not the ESL ones, as I assume that teachers from ESL countries are more proficient and qualified than their counterparts from the EFL ones. Actually I wanted to add the word 'developing', becoming 'developing EFL countries' as I assume that for one reason or another the proficiency of teachers from developed countries is better than that of teachers in developing countries, but I am not so sure about this. (See note on Japan). According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) report in 1987, the quality of education in general has been declining, and it is the quality of teachers and the teaching which is thought to account for the decline (Saleh, 1994: 6). It is true that there are a number of factors contributing to the decline of education, but the quality of teachers is a major factor as confirmed by the fact that "In Australia, the quality as well as the role of teachers, besides methods and curriculum, have been predominantly considered as effective independent variables on the success of teaching." (*ibid.*)

In my naiveté, I thought that the poor proficiency of English teachers was only found in Indonesia. But the fact that a number of TEFL diploma courses and in-service programs such as the English Language Institute, Victoria University, New Zealand, International House, UK and many others provide proficiency courses for EFL teachers studying there from different countries, bears witness to the fact that the English of many of in-service English teachers is still deficient. This is also corroborated by people who are in charge of Cambridge Examination in English for Language Teachers (1987: 1), who say that "...many thousands of teachers have not yet attained levels of competence of English language proficiency which would, ordinarily, be deemed necessary and sufficient to allow them to practice as teachers of the language."

At the Regional Language Centre (RELC) Singapore, I found that the English proficiency of a number of English teachers from the EFL countries, such as Indonesia and Thailand, was not adequate enough to follow lectures in English. That teachers' English proficiency is not sufficient is also reported in Egypt (Doff, 1987:68: 'a fairly common situation in Egyptian schools..'). In Colombia, the situation was not any better as reported by Diaz (1973: 278) who says "All Colombian teachers of English have one problem in common: they cannot make oral use of the language they teach." My suspicion is that perhaps in most developing countries, the English proficiency of many teachers is insufficient to qualify them as English teachers. In relation to this, Berry (1990: 98) suspects that in teacher training, language improvement, particularly in in-service training, which is probably the commonest need , is often underestimated or taken for granted. He further points out that "China, however, is not the only country in

the world where modern language teachers feel a real need for in-service improvement to their language proficiency."

As teachers still play an important role, i.e. as a model for correctness, it behooves me to be concerned about their English proficiency. In this case, Williams (1975: 108) is of the opinion that "the teacher should have a thorough knowledge of the language he is supposed to teach. He has to know how the language works in order to be able to handle it. In relation to this, Buchmann (1982: 61, as quoted by Saleh) puts it, "...To acquire, for example, delivery skills is pointless unless teachers know something they can deliver." Bowen (1966: 114) concurs saying that if a teacher teaches a foreign language, then he must do his utmost to master the foreign language as well as he possibly can; and it is his imperative responsibility to produce a reliable model of the foreign language and to enforce acceptable standards on the part of the students. In relation to this, Thomas (1987: 34) suggests that as the main objective of teaching a language is to develop the learner's mastery of it, it follows that the language teacher needs the competence to achieve it. In other words, in very broad terms, language teacher competence is the competence to impart competence in language. So if the competence is little or insufficient, then there is nothing much to impart, thus depriving the learner of the opportunity to develop. In order to impart her/his competence to learners, teachers should themselves have language competence to a greater degree than that expected of their learners.

Scarbrough (1976: 105) also holds that the degree of motivation of the students and the quality of the teacher contribute to successful teaching to a large extent. He suggests that "the quality of the teacher can outweigh deficiencies in teaching materials and can even overcome inappropriate classroom techniques." Doff (1987: 68) is also convinced that the teacher's English competence is a particularly important factor in the design of appropriate training material. Strevens (1974: 23) suggests that one of the major skills a teacher should have is command of the language he or she is teaching,

> " the teacher of a language is the learner's model, especially as far as the spoken language is concerned, and if the teacher's command of the language is inadequate , the learner's achievement will be impaired. Learners, including children, have a pretty good general idea of their teacher's standard, even though they themselves may be complete beginners. It is a source of great discouragement (and therefore a constraint upon learning) for a learner to have a teacher whose command of the language is inadequate, who makes obvious errors in the classroom, who is uncertain about meanings and grammatical patterns, who has no confidence in his own grasp of the language. Consequently the skills component of a teacher-training course must ensure that the teacher's command of English (or whatever language he is teaching) is at least adequate for classroom purpose. *This ought to be a make-or- break requirement*, since the teacher without an adequate command of the language is probably wasting his own time and that of all his pupils, and he may be bruising their general enthusiasm as learners into the bargain."

In relation to teacher's competence, we have a proverb in Indonesian which sums up the above argument, "Guru kencing berdiri, murid kencing berlari" (If the teacher urinates by standing, then his students would do so by running). it means that if the model is bad, the followers will be worse.

As an illustration, let me take the example from Indonesia. Due to the proliferation of poor private teachers colleges, the quality of graduates from these colleges leaves much to be desired. The main reasons are that they were not well selected, many of the lecturers are not full time, thus not dedicated, and the lecturers are also under pressure of the powers-that-be to pass them in the examinations. I hasten to add here that there are also good TTCs which are better than the state ones. The following are some samples of what the Indonesian in-service and pre-service teachers wrote.

a. In-service teachers (RELC certificate holders) responding to an RELC questionnaire:

"We former course members necessary to hear and read all publications."

"My people at the state also need very much reading RELC Journal."

"Since I studied at RELC, I have found more practically knowledge especially, in the field of language teaching methodology. However, all subject given are useful for those who is a teacher or teacher of English."

"Besides a problem common to many teachers in Indonesia is while the medium of instructional in textbooks is the National Language, be it Bahasa Indonesia."

b. Graduating teacher trainees (Central Java) from private TTCs who were sitting for state exams:

"What are they hobby in the USA?"

"Who is invented the telephone?"

"College is a place that people life in it."

"He not find his T-shirt because it was wearing his brother."

"What means by high fashion?"

"Is Benjamin Franklin used a kite in his experiments?"

"This type can be used if the testees not so many and it subjectively of the results."

(Courtesy of Retmono, IKIP Semarang)

Unfortunately, the number of English teachers whose command of English is inadequate like the above is quite substantial as Lee (1974: 37) observes, "I am talking chiefly here about teachers who can hardly produce or understand a single sentence of fluent and correct English, and there are thousands such, as we have to recognise."

"So what is the use of the proficiency courses during the training?" you may ask.

The assumption is that when the trainees graduate, their proficiency is already good, otherwise they would not graduate. The problem is how good is good. This is where the crux of the matter is. In the absence of reliable national standard calibration, a 'good' student in one TTC may not be good at all if s/he were in another TTC. As , I presume, the pass or failure in the proficiency courses depends on the individual lecturers and the norms thus vary greatly; and some of the poor students pass the course because the teacher may be fed up with them. In other words as there is no quality control using objective external calibration, the quality suffers. In manufacturing business, there is the so-called ISO standard of

quality, to control the process and the product, it is the ultimate goal of manufacturing. Why can't we emulate it? There is in our field thus the need for a certificate of proficiency awarded by an independent institution, separate from the diploma.

Referring back to the question, during the training period, the students have to take other non-proficiency courses to equip them with knowledge to become qualified teachers, and these courses may be too many and at the expense of the proficiency courses. Such a thing is usually the result of top-down decision making, where the authorities prescribe the syllabus based on the idea of 'proper balance' on paper between proficiency courses and content courses, not realizing that proficiency courses require more contact hours and longer time. These are the main reasons, and of course there are other reasons why they fail to perform satisfactorily.

The national language testing centre

No teacher educator in his/her right mind would expect that the English of the graduating non-native pre-service teachers is 'perfect', but at least it should be generally 'good', i.e. most of the pronunciation, sentence construction, and choice of words are correct, they can understand the message in most of the oral language, and when they speak the message is easily understood. Take, for example, level 6 of the overall proficiency from the ESU Framework (Carroll and West. 1989) which reads as follows:

> "Uses language with confidence in moderately difficult situations. Noticeable lapses in accuracy, fluency, appropriacy and organisation in complex situations, but communication and comprehension are effective on most occasions, and are easily restored when difficulties arise."

Hopefully they would improve their proficiency when they are in-service, as certificate of competence is only an indication of a beginning competence, whereas full competence is a lifetime development.

Before we proceed, let us discuss the meaning of 'proficiency' and 'standardization'. In terms of standard proficiency, I follow Yalden (1987: 16) who says that a standard or generalized proficiency entails the setting of tests by some central body, whether it be a group of teachers, an institution, or an educational authority. Whereas 'standardization' is the process of making the learners meet the minimum requirements or standards of proficiency arrived at through the administration of standardized tests.

The need to establish a national language testing center is in relation to the maintenance of quality of the TTC graduates. As mentioned earlier, without any objective external examination, the quality of the graduates would vary tremendously. At RELC, the proficiency of lecturers from Indonesia who take courses varies tremendously, some are excellent and some others are so poor they would not even be accepted as students at respectable TTCs in Indonesia.

Therefore to reduce the widening gap, a standardized test for graduating students is in order. The national language testing center is the one to produce, administer and score the tests. In order to avoid prejudice and suspicion (of collusion, etc.), the center must be an independent body, unattached to any of

the existing TTC. In addition, its other tasks are to determine the national norms, to operationally define the different levels of proficiency, i.e. elementary, intermediate, and advanced, and to conduct research to improve the quality of the tests. If need be, and if the funds are sufficient, it can also produce tests for other purposes. The center should have its own professional staff, but it does not preclude hiring experts from other institutions. The main objectives of standardized test are: (a) to provide TTCs with *a reliable national yardstick* with which to measure their graduating students; (b) *to build confidence* in the prospective teachers about their own capability; (c) *to stimulate a healthy competition among teacher trainees*; (d) to encourage *improvement of proficiency* in particular and teacher training in general; (e) to encourage national institutions *to develop their own tests*; and (f) *to convince society of the credibility of its teachers*.

To illustrate the administration of the standardized test, the following is the scenario:
The National Testing Center conducts a survey to find out the ideal minimum standard of proficiency for teachers of English in the country; the survey would also include needs analysis. It then constructs different batteries of test for tryouts. Trialling is done at different TTCs to find the norms, and in the meantime the team also makes operational definitions of elementary, intermediate and advanced levels and determine their respective scores. The TTCs are then offered the standardized test. The center administers and marks the tests, and awards certificates as well. The certificate should provide a clear and specific statement of the level and coverage of the test employed.

If TTCs from several countries in a region are agreeable to the idea of a standardized test, they can cooperate and establish a regional testing center; for example RELC in Singapore as a regional testing center for ASEAN countries. If such a thing could materialize, it is expected that there would be a healthy competition among the country members to improve the quality of proficiency of their graduates. In case of ASEAN, a distinction should be made between ESL and EFL countries (Singapore Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines would be ESL countries, whereas Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia would be EFL countries). I realize how difficult it is to distinguish between ESL and EFL in a country such as Malaysia, Brunei, and Myanmar, so the distinction is purely arbitrary. Another difficulty is that each country has its own TTC system which might be different from the others which could cause validity problems for the regional standardized test. In any case, as it is a proficiency rather than achievement test, the different backgrounds may not be particularly relevant.

As a matter of fact, in relation to national and regional standardized tests, RELC adopted the idea and has started such a program, with Indonesia as its pilot project. With the assistance from the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia Language Testing Research at the University of Melbourne, the project has produced and trialled the test at IKIP (TTC) Malang and Semarang. The objectives of the testing project are:

a. To develop standardized proficiency tests for pre-service and in-service teachers of English in

Indonesia;

b. To use the tests to establish a norm for qualified teachers of English in Indonesia;

c. To train teacher-trainers of IKIPs (TTCs) in Indonesia to construct good tests

d. To promote the test package for use by prospective employers of teachers

The test will be administered to the graduating students at the beginning of their final year. Why graduating students? The main reasons are (a). the assumption that their English is good enough for a prospective teacher of English and (b). if they are not up to expectations, they still have time to improve it during the year.

If the results are still poor, the institution concerned should do a number of things for long term benefits, such as revamping the syllabus, providing more hours for proficiency courses, reviewing materials, methodology and method of student selection. Maybe such a thing is easier said than done, particularly in a country where educational policy and decision making is centralized in the Ministry of Education, i.e. a top-down approach. In such a case providing more hours and using our own method of student selection would be difficult. (For your information, our TTC [IKIP Malang] had to provide extra hours, more than prescribed by the official syllabus and return to the condemned audiolingual approach, after knowing the poor results of the 'communicative approach').

To see whether the testing project has been successful or not, an accompanying research should be conducted to monitor and evaluate the project. Without such a research, it would be difficult for us to check whether there has been any progress at all.

If the Ministry of Education of a country has its accreditation system, the standardized test would help much in deciding whether an English Department of a TTC is worth accrediting. If everything else is excellent, but the proficiency of the students is poor, I doubt if it should be accredited. In other words, the performance of the students should account for a major portion in the accreditation of an English department of a TTC. By accreditation is here meant the official recognition and approval of an institution as having met the criteria of a good institution. But what I mean here is specialized accreditation, not institutional one. Specialized accreditation deals with programs, emphasizing heavily on standards of good practice, some of which may be quantitative, while focusing somewhat on goal achievement (Kreidler, 1984. 91). Accreditation will certainly stimulate institutions to improve the quality of their programs as a program which is not accredited will suffer financially as well as socially.

Problems

The ideal standardization of TTC graduates is not without attendant problems. The cognoscenti would be skeptical because of its inherent problems. First of all the establishment of an independent national language testing centre would cost a great deal of money. Thus the first task is to convince the authorities as to the benefit of the establishment and the next step is to seek funds from the government.

As the test takers are to pay the testing fee, it will generate money, but perhaps the income will not be sufficient enough to stand on its own feet, thus it will still need government subsidy, unless of course if it can find pecuniary support from non-governmental institutions.

Secondly, it is not easy to recruit full-time professionals to work for the language center unless it has more attractive benefits than, say, lecturers. It cannot be manned by part-timers as the job would require full dedication from the employees. The center of course could always hire part-time professionals from TTCs or other institutions for setting papers and marking.

Thirdly, it is not easy to construct standardized tests and it takes a long time to produce one. In order to produce a TOEFL test for example, it takes the Educational Testing Service more than a year. Writing operational definitions of different proficiency levels is not easy either, particularly as it is fraught with shortcomings and rather difficult to apply, so the decision is in the end arbitrary. The operational definition should be in terms of actual performance in the real world of teaching. The descriptors should use real-world terms meant to be intelligible to teacher trainees, teacher educators as well as consumers such as employers and admissions officers in colleges or universities. (See appendix on overall proficiency as a 'mother' yardstick from which further more specific yardsticks could be derived).

Fourthly, to get all the appropriate bodies to cooperate is a daunting task and the center has to win friends and influence people in the English Department of TTCs by convincing them that it will do their department good if they join the standardized test scheme. In addition, graduates who hold a certificate of proficiency would have an added value, so s/he would have a better chance of securing employment. As predicted, there will be a number of institutions which might not be interested or reluctant in having their students sit for the standardized test for a number of reasons, the main one would be the fact that the results could reveal their own weaknesses which they might not like, as if the result is poor, it would not be a good sales promotion for their institution. But later they may have to join it due to pressure from within and without, meaning that when the certificate of proficiency is already popular, any prospective employer of English teachers would also request the certificate as a primary requirement in an application for a vacancy.

Fifthly is the question of proficiency test itself. If it is a proficiency test, would not it be better for them just to take one of the internationally established tests, such as TOEFL, ALIGU, or IELTS?

For one thing, such tests are too expensive for our students (particularly in developing countries). In addition, those tests are for general proficiency or EAP, and our test is meant for teachers, so it would be more valid psychometrically if the test is designed especially for teachers of English. James and Kweldju argue that those tests are meant for overseas study (mostly EAP), for communication with native speakers abroad, and it is Anglo-Saxon oriented, while the majority of prospective teachers will be teaching domestically and unlikely to go overseas for further study (James and Kweldju, 1994, 4-5).

In this case it may argued further that after all the results of those established tests would also be able to predict the proficiency of the candidates. The results of the tests may correlate significantly, but that needs to be corroborated by research, and there are other reasons for having our own tests. One of them is that we would like to train ourselves to become good test writers, and to be independent; otherwise we would never learn. Another reason is to make the test affordable to our students. The last and the least reason is 'political economy' -- creating new employment and keeping the profit (if any) generated by the tests to ourselves.

Speaking about established tests, the closest one to our need is the Certificate in English for English Language Teachers (CEELT), produced by the Cambridge Syndicate whose aim is "to provide an incentive for teachers of English to improve their language proficiency for personal and professional development, focusing on the language teaching classroom and providing tasks related to the work of a language teacher. It is not a teaching qualification." (Carroll and West. 1989:70)

Last but not least is the question of sustainability. If all the TTCs in a (big) country would join it, the possibility of its survival is assured as it would generate a lot of money, otherwise it would have to be subsidized by the government. Its sustainability is thus questionable, particularly in the first years of its existence, as there would not be many institutions joining it yet. Perhaps the lead time to reach a break even point is five years. Again it is like opening a business venture selling a new product in which the first two or three years would not be profitable, but once the product is popular and indispensable, it will sell well, like the tissue paper. The tissue paper was unknown in Indonesia several years ago, now women cannot live without it. The lesson from the tissue paper is that we have to create a demand and make the demand indispensable.

How to make the project successful.

There are two ways to make the project successful. The first is the kid gloves approach, that is by persuading the TTCs to join the program, showing them the long term benefits for the students as well as the institutions. If it fails, then the iron fist is used, that is by imposing an authoritative rule that all TTCs in the country should join it., many people will not like it as it is against democratic principles. But for a developing country, sometimes democratic principles have to be sacrificed for the good of the majority and the nation. Does it sound familiar?

For long-term planning, I would suggest that TTCs administer regular year-end objective proficiency exams for their first , second and the third year students to improve the quality of the students. Some TTCs may have different systems, but whatever the system a regular objective test should be administered, and what is meant here is a yearly or periodic (standardized) objective test., not the teacher-made one. So when they are in the final year, they are better prepared for the standardized exams. As we all know that it takes a long time to be proficient in a foreign language, thus the need for a

guided long time preparation. Some people might say that the students would be test-oriented, not learning-oriented. I think even when the students prepare for tests, be it objective or subjective test, they also learn a lot, and they will also uncover problems they might have missed if they were not compelled to sit for an exam. In addition, in the process of learning for tests, they would also be able to gain an overview of what they have been learning. Psychologically, they will also feel more confident if they can pass an external standardized test.

The washback effect.

Having received the result of a standardized test, a TTC is usually obliged to improve teacher training in terms of the student input, the teaching staff, the teaching materials, the syllabus and the facilities -- this is the washback effect. The teacher trainees would work harder to pass the national standardized test in order to obtain certificates. The teacher educators would also work harder to enable their students to pass the test and attempt to beat competitors from other TTCs. The institution in turn also wants to improve its image and reputation by providing more facilities for learning, particularly if there is a ranking system among TTCs.

In principle, TTC should be aware of the basic competence a teacher ought to have, and this competence should underlie the syllabus. The competence consists of language competence and language teacher competence, and if one is a teacher educator, another aspect of competence, i.e. language teacher educator competence, should be added (Thomas. 1987. 33-42). In other words a good language teacher should have competence in language system and use (language competence), explicit knowledge of language system and use (language awareness), and competence in teaching language (pedagogic competence). (A teacher educator, in addition to the possession of the above, should also have explicit knowledge of pedagogic-linguistic theory and competence in teaching how to teach language).

Ideally, once the teacher trainees graduate, their proficiency should be maintained. But in an EFL country, particularly in a developing country, maintenance of proficiency is a Herculean task. In other words, the shelf life of the certificate is about two years only. In remote areas in Indonesia, most of the teachers' proficiency regresses. It would be good if the Ministry of Education could hold regular refresher proficiency courses for these teachers. In relation to this, RELC suggested that there be standardized tests for in-service teachers administered in regular intervals, such a test would keep the teachers on toe. If their English is kept ship shape, hopefully it will affect the quality of their teaching as well. Lee (1974.42) in this case suggests that recurrent in-service periods of study and practice be conducted as training, including self-training, is never complete.

Summary and conclusion

To improve the proficiency of teachers of EFL , particularly in developing countries, it is suggested that the graduating students of TTCs sit for a standardized test . For this purpose, a national language testing center is established. The center will construct, administer and mark the standardized test and award certificates of proficiency for different levels, i.e. elementary, intermediate and advanced. The center should be an independent body. With the availability of a national yardstick, when they graduate the teacher trainees' proficiency has at least met the minimum requirements to become qualified teachers. Hopefully, the standardized test would encourage a healthy competition among students, lecturers as well as institutions. It is also expected that the washback effect of the test would improve the overall quality of proficiency training. The testing project should be accompanied by research to monitor and evaluate it. It would be ideal if a standardized test such as this could also be administered to the teacher trainees of a region, such as ASEAN.

To conclude, let me repeat what Martin hoped back in 1975 (p.106),

> " But by far the most interesting element of these courses is that they may perhaps be leading towards harmonisation of professional standards ..... Is this not an indication that there could soon be a possibility of international professional standards? ..... One sometimes wonders whether our professional lives would not be better served by some kind of centralisation of efforts and resources: whether changes and developments would not come about more quickly and more effectively by establishing in a capital city of the language a specialist centre, call it what you will, a National Institute of English Studies, where learners (at *all* levels) /teachers/ trainees/ trainers/ researchers/aids and material creators could provide and/or be provided with all the essential ingredients."

Is it just a pipe dream of a frustrated teacher trainer?

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Notes:

a. Definition of terms:

1. ***Standards :*** " A standard is an authoritative principle or rule that usually implies a model or pattern for guidance, by comparison with which the quantity, excellence , correctness, etc., of other things may be determined." (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language). Thus ***standardization*** of TTC graduates refers to the process of making the graduates meet an authoritative principle of excellence determined by meeting the minimum required score on a standardized test.

2. ***Standardized Test:*** "A test (a) which has been developed from tryouts and experimentation to ensure that it is reliable and valid, (b) for which norms have been established, (c) which provides uniform procedures for administering (time limits, response format, and number of questions) and for scoring the test. (Richards, Platt, and Weber. 1985.271)

3. ***Accreditation:*** "A voluntary, (non-) governmental (the bracket is mine. ES) process conducted by post-secondary institutions to accomplish at least two things -- to attempt to hold one another accountable on a periodic basis to live up to stated, appropriate institutional or program goals; and to assess the extent to which the institution or program meets established standards. The major purposes of the process are to

foster improvement and to identify institutions and programs that seem to be achieving stated goals and that seem to meet the agreed upon standards." (H R Kelly, 1980. 9)

Accreditation would bring about the following changes (D C Smith. 1990.3-6) (a) the increased attention to the professionalization of education personnel; (b) the increased attention to and discussion of the knowledge and content in programs often referred to as the "knowledge base" (read 'proficiency'), (c) the discussion of who are the teacher trainers, the qualifications, the credentials, and general makeup of that population; (d) a shift in attention from individual programs to a focus on the responsibility of the professional educational unit; (e) a focus on the whole university's responsibility for teacher education. Hopefully these would also affect the proficiency level of the students.

4. On ***proficiency*** Yalden (1987.16) suggests the following:

4.1. "The concept of a ***standard or generalized definition of proficiency:*** It entails the setting of tests by some central body, whether it be a group of teachers, an institution, or an educational authority. It assumes some uniformity in instruction, and also that input in the form of items taught ought to equal output in the form of items learned. It also means that teachers and those responsible for the preparation of curricular syllabus can determine the syllabus upon which testing would be based."

4.2. "The concept of ***variable definition of proficiency***. It governs an approach in which input is believed to be affected by the learner's processing before it can turn into output. Preparing a syllabus therefore becomes more complex, as there are several sets of factors (components of communicative competence) to be dealt with, and allowance must be made for variation in the goals and purposes of the learners, as well as their personal characteristics."

b. Good command of English:

To define 'good command of a language' is virtually impossible. Strevens (1974: 21) remarks "The question of how great is a 'sufficient command' of the language is a difficult one to answer. My own preference is to define it as 'error free in the classroom', leaving out judgment any greater command that the teacher may display in his private life. This is a minimum, but it is at least more capable of being achieved than many broader statements of ability."

c. TEFL in Japan:

TEFL in Japan now must be better than the one described by Harasawa (1974: 71) twenty years ago, "Of all the countries in the world where English has been taught on a nationwide scale, Japan seems to me about the least successful, though I say this who am Japanese myself." Further he says "There are some 70,000 teachers of English, including 4,500 in the universities, and I suspect that many of them are unqualified or partly qualified. Our qualifying system is so loose and easygoing that any university graduate, however dull, can become a qualified teacher so long as he obtains during his undergraduate years a certain limited number of credits, coupled with brief and very perfunctory practice in teaching (*ibid.* 74-75) .(*A Critical Survey of English Language Teaching in Japan. A Personal View.* ELT Journal vol. XXIX no. 1 Oct. 1974) The situation is now better. (Hirabayashi Teruo, Takamatsu National College of Technology, personal communication, February 1995)

d. Teacher Training Colleges:

There are different systems TTCs follow. The first is the one that trains students to become teachers right from their beginning year (Freshman) in a four-year study program; in other words it is a simultaneous program. The second is the one that trains BA graduates usually for one-year diploma in TESL/TEFL program; this can be called a consecutive program. Another system is the so-called 'Sandwich Program' in which practice teaching is sandwiched between training. My paper is based on the four-year simultaneous undergraduate program.

e. Poor non-native English teacher:

What is the profile of a poor non-native English teacher? Williams (1975: 108) suggests that (a) he is afraid to let the foreign language do its own work, and if he believes that he would constantly help by way of the mother tongue; (b) he may not be fully conversant with everyday English usage; (c) he may

not be fluent enough to pass on the basic language skills to his pupils; (d) his language could lack authenticity and genuineness.

f. The 'ideal' language teacher.

There is no such a paragon as the ideal language teacher. In this case Strevens (1974: 20-21) suggests the following characteristics of an 'ideal' teacher: possessing certain positive personal qualities, technical abilities and professional understanding. To make an 'ideal' teacher, a TTC should have four basic elements: (1) *Selection*, both initially, for acceptance as a trainee, and terminally, for acceptance as a teacher. (2) *Continuing personal education of the trainee*. (3). *General professional training as an educator and teacher*. (4). *Special training as a teacher of a foreign or second language*.

05. Cambridge Examination in English for Language Teachers (CEELT), University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (1987).

The aims of the CEELT are twofold: (a) to provide an incentive for non-native teachers of English to improve their language proficiency for personal and professional development by focusing on the language teaching classroom and (b) to provide tasks related to the work of a language teacher. The test consists of two levels and each level comprises three papers. The test components are oral (reading aloud and oral interaction); listening/viewing comprehension using video; reading and writing.

06. RELC English Teacher Proficiency Test for Indonesia (1994)

The embryonic English Proficiency Test for Indonesia aims to assess English language proficiency as relevant to ***teachers***, both in their roles of teaching or preparing to teach ***inside*** the classroom, and in their roles as participants in pre-service training and professional development activities away from the classroom. The content is based on topics and situations relevant to, familiar and hence accessible to the Indonesians. The raters are trained local IKIP lecturers. The test consists of two integrated tests: Reading/Writing and Listening/Speaking. (Joyce & Kweldju, 1994)

07. The Washback Hypothesis

Alderson and Walsh (1992) suggest that a test will influence: teaching, learning, ***what*** and ***how*** teachers teach, ***what*** and ***how*** learners learn, the ***rate*** and ***sequence*** of teaching/learning, the ***degree*** and ***depth*** of teaching/learning, ***attitudes*** to the content, method, etc. of teaching/learning. Tests that have important consequences will have washback; those that don't, won't. Tests will have washback on ***all*** teachers and learners. Tests will have washback effects for ***so me*** teachers and learners, but not for others.

(Alderson, J. C. and D. Walsh. 1992. "Does Washback Exist?". Paper prepared for Language Testing Research Colloquium, Vancouver.)

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Appendix

Overall Language Proficiency

(Carroll and West 1989. ESU Framework 21)

9 Has a full command of the language, tackling the most difficult tasks with consistent accuracy, fluency, appropriate usage, organisation and comprehension. An exceptional level of mastery, not always reached by native speakers, even quite educated ones.

8 Uses a full range of language with proficiency approaching that in the learner's own mother tongue. Copes well even with demanding and complex language situations. Makes occasional minor lapses in accuracy, fluency, appropriacy and organisation which do not affect communication. Only rare uncertainties in conveying or comprehending the content of the message.

7. Uses language effectively and in most situations, except the very complex and difficult. A few lapses in accuracy, fluency, appropriacy and organisation but communication is effective and consistent, with only a few uncertainties in conveying or comprehending the content of the message.

6. Uses language with confidence in moderately difficult situations. Noticeable lapses in accuracy, fluency, appropriacy and organisation in complex situations, but communication and comprehension are effective on most occasions, and are easily restored when difficulties arise.

5. Uses the language independently and effectively in all familiar and moderately difficult situations. Rather frequent lapses in accuracy, fluency, appropriacy and organization, but usually succeeds in communicating and comprehending general message.

4. Uses basic range of language, sufficient for familiar and non-pressuring situations. Many lapses in accuracy, fluency, appropriacy and organisation, restricting continual communication and comprehension, so frequent efforts are needed to ensure communicative intention is achieved.

3. Uses a limited range of language, sufficient for simple practical needs. In more exacting situations, there are frequent problems in accuracy, fluency, appropriacy and organisation, so that normal communication and comprehension frequently break down or are difficult to keep going.

2. Uses a very narrow range of language, adequate for basic needs and simple situations. Does not really have sufficient language to cope with normal day-to-day, real-life communication, but basic communication is possible with adequate opportunities for assistance. Uses short, often inaccurately and inappropriately worded messages, with constant lapses in fluency.

1. Uses a few words or phrases such as common greetings, and recognizes some public notices or signs. At the lowest level, recognizes which language is being used.

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